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ABSTRACT

A survey was conducted of 140 city and country public recreation agencies in Kentucky to determine the programs offered for the aging. Of the 44 agencies responding to the questionnaire, only 47.7 percent offered programs especially designed for the senior adult. However, the other agencies indicated that there were programs in which the senior adult could participate. Among the 44 agencies, there were six that employed personnel to work with the aged. The most popular activities were arts and crafts, exercise, socials, and food services. Popular special activities included holiday programs and trips. Seven of the 44 agencies operated separate budgets for senior adults. A copy of the survey instrument is appended. (Author/CB)

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Survey of City/County Therapeutic Recreation Programs for Aging

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Alton D. Little

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Abstract

"Survey of City/County Therapeutic Recreation Programs For Aging"

A survey was conducted of one hundred and forty city/county public recreation agencies in Kentucky in an effort to determine the programs offered for the aging.

There were forty-four responses to the questionnaire. Some of the agencies indicated they do not program for the senior adult as a separate group. Only 47.7 percent offered programs just for the senior adult.

Twenty-one respondents completed the remainder of the questionnaire. The results indicated there were six agencies that employed people to work with the aged. The most popular ongoing activities were arts and crafts, exercise, socials, arts and food services. The most popular special activities was holiday programs and trips. Only seven of the agencies operated a separate budget for the senior adults.

A followup of this study will include senior adult programs in approximately eight hundred nursing homes.

Survey of City/County Therapeutic

Recreation Programs for Aging

Aging is a continuous process but it does not progress at the same rate for everyone. The rate of aging is not even. The process may be deferred in some people and accelerated in others. There is really no given age as to when the effects of aging will begin to make you feel old. Many people are young even when they are considered to be old by people who know their chronological age. The opposite is also very true. Many people are old when their chronological age would indicate the person should be much younger. Whatever the rate of aging, if life continues for the individual, aging is inevitable.

This aging process is indicated by the statistics found in the literagure pertaining to the aged. One source is Shivers and Fait (1980:2) when they reported:

> "More than 22 million people 65 years of age or older now reside in the United States. Of this number, those between 70 and 84 years represent approximately 11 million people; those between 85 and 99 account for another million; and slightly more than 12,500 have reached the 100 year mark."

The magnitude of this aging process is more clearly focused when additional statistics are viewed. Moran (1979:3) reported:

> "According to population experts during an average day 3,900 persons reach the age of 65 (1.4 million annually), 3,080 persons over 65 years of age die (1.1 million annually). Thus, there is an average daily net increase of 820 persons in the 65 years and older age group, or approximately 301,000 annually. It is estimated that by the year 2000 between 45 and 50 million middle-aged adults will have reached their 65th birthday."

Shivers and Fait (1980:3) reported the average life expectancy has increased to 71.2 years. As improvements continue in the medical science

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and health care areas, life expectancy should increase. The percentage of population considered older adults should also increase as these improvements continue to make strides. Evidence is already apparent in this trend, as shown by Moran (1979:4):

> "Since the turn of the century, the population of the United States tripled surpassing the 200 million figure (207,237,000). But the population of persons 65 years and older has grown seven times as large (22 million or 10 percent of the total population)."

As the aging process continues, it is not the problem of having leisure but using it wisely. Many people who are retired or retiring today are not prepared for a life without work. Society in the United States is only a couple of generations away from the agricultural way of life. This life was characterized by working from sunup to sundown and usually made no provisions for retirement. The work ethic was ingrained and now they live in a society where they have to retire. A new set of values must be developed that will allow for a leisure ethic. A new view of leisure with less work must find favor in society and in the life of the individual.

The Resource Planning and Evaluation Division, North Carolina Department of Natural and Economic Resources published A Time To Enjoy. In this publication, mention was made of conditions as they exist "today" for the aged and as they should exist "tomorrow." The conditions "today" stated, "There are TOO MANY elderly citizens who are:

Not wanted - placed in rest homes or nursing homes
In need of suitable living arrangements
In need of wholesome family relationships
Economically insecure
Lonely
Physically or mentally handicapped

In poor health
In need of health protection care
Not recognized as individuals
In need of opportunity for self-expression."

In part, these conditions are a reality to some of the changes that take place in the life of the aging person. Carlson (1970:4) lists five changes that impact the individual a great deal and include financial security, physical changes, social isolation, decline in status and adjustment to change.

a. Financial security - Many older people have less income than they did before retirement. This lower income makes it necessary to alter life styles. Often the fixed income may present more of a psychological problem than an economic problem. However, the worry was on making a living and is now centered on proper use of leisure.

b. Physical changes - Carlson (1970:5) mentioned, "the five B's" of the forties - baldness, bridges, bulges, bunions, and bifocals. This is a time when atrophy becomes more pronounced. This decline of physical abilities is often a problem for the aged.

c. Social isolation - Retirement from the work force and in many cases limited income causes the individual to withdraw from the mainstream of life. There is also a loss of friends and colleagues to either migration or death.

d. Decline in status - When the job is not in the life of the individual, much of his recognition is lost. The individual was known for his position, advice, counsel and supervision. Typically, no mission or task is found in leisure which is as fulfilling as it was in work life.

e. Adjustment to change - Adjustment becomes the way of life. Adjustments must be made in family, friends, home, work, prestige, responsibility and in authority. Change cannot be avoided, and many have not prepared for it nor adjust to it very well.

However, the individual does not have to face a life that presents this bleak picture. The individual will have to prepare for later life and society will have to be ready and able to accept its part of the responsibility in providing for this time of life. The booklet, A Time To Enjoy, then listed the conditions that should exist "Tommorow" and stated, "Let's have MORE elderly citizens who are:

Well adjusted
Blessed with a good outlook on life
Eager and able to serve
Physically and mentally alert
Self sufficient
Have many skills, talents and abilities to offer
Ready to participate
Considerate and appreciative
Financially independent and secure
Spiritually satisfied."

The situation can be obtained in part by recreation and the proper preparation for leisure. There are many values of recreation for the aged and a few of them are listed below:

Personal satisfaction
Creative expression
Recognition
Love, Understanding and Companionship
Opportunity to participate in and contribute to society
Enjoyment
Self expression
Sense of belonging
Development of new interests

By contributing to these values, the senior adult is being assured of a better life. The recreation program should involve the eight areas of recreation shown below and this will certainly fulfill the Senior Citizens Bill of Rights listed in A Time To Enjoy (a copy of the Bill of Rights is

included at the end of the article). The areas of recreation are:

Arts and Crafts	Music
Dancing	Nature and Outings
Drama	Socials
Literary Activities	Sports and Games

A survey was conducted in Kentucky in an effort to determine what is being done by municipal park and recreation agencies for the senior citizens. The 1980 population of Kentucky residents age 65 and over was about 420,000. By 1990, it is estimated that this group will number about 500,000 and by the year 2020 will include about 850,000. After reviewing these figures, the importance of knowing what type recreation programming was being offered became more imperative. Therefore, a survey was mailed to one hundred and forty public recreation agencies in Kentucky. There were forty-four responses or about 31.4% return to the survey (a copy of the survey is attached). In response to the question "Do you program for senior citizens?" there were twenty-one (47.7%) affirmative responses and twenty-three (52.2%) agencies did not program for this group. Only four respondents indicated they planned to start a program, one wanted to start in 1985, and another in 1986. Two of the twenty-three respondents budgeted money for senior programming and four responded that the senior programs were handled by another agency. This actually left only seventeen respondents (38.6%) that were not involved in programming for the senior adults.

Those respondents that had a program were instructed to complete the rest of the survey. The number doing this was twenty-one.

When asked if employees were hired to work primarily with senior adults, six responded yes. Four of these gave the number of employees

and that number totaled thirteen. This averaged 3.25 workers per working unit that indicated their number of employees.

Question four asked for the ongoing activities offered for senior citizens. Seventeen respondents (80.9%) listed their activities. The most popular activity was arts and crafts, followed by exercise activity, and then socials. Table 1 shows the top answers received:

Table 1
Ongoing Activities for Senior Citizens

Activity	# Responses	% Responses
Arts and Crafts	10	58.8
Exercise Activity	9	52.9
Socials	4	23.5
Arts	3	17.6
Food Services	3	17.6

n = 17

Several activities were listed twice, including golf, bowling, dances, bingo and social services. The attendance ranged from a low of fifteen for golf lessons to 4,500 for social services. The activities were offered either daily, weekly or monthly.

Question five asked about the special activities or events planned for senior citizens. Holiday programs and trips tied as the number one answer. Birthday parties and eating events tied for the third place. Golf, bowling, and musical activities were listed next with the greatest number of responses. The lowest attendance was ten in a cribbage tournament and the largest number was five hundred in the social services activity. Most of these activities were offered annually with some taking place each month or on a weekly basis.

Question six asked if a separate budget allocation was provided for

senior citizens. Seven respondents indicated they had a separate budget. Five of these reported amount budgeted and the total was $180,728. This made an average of $36,145 for the five respondents who gave budget figures. These allocations come from all size communities as shown in Table 2.

Table 2
Reported Budgets for Senior Citizens

City	Population		Budget
Adairville	1,096		1,500
Frankfort	25,973		15,000
Glasgow	11,500		55,348
Lexington	204,000		36,430
Louisville	684,565		72,450
		N = 5	$180,728
		Average	$36,145

It should be noted that some of the respondents do not program senior citizens as a special group. The senior citizen is included in many activities where age does not become a limiting factor. However, the number of senior adults included in "general" programming would be hard to document.

Question seven asked if facilities were operated just for senior citizens. Five responded they had facilities operated this way. The total was twelve facilities for senior citizens only.

Question eight was included to see if anyone was interested in taking college classes in gerontology. Eight people indicated an interest in both undergraduate and graduate courses.

There is certainly a great deal of interest in senior citizen programs. However it would appear that a more comprehensive program could be developed using the eight areas of recreation. What is happening in your area? What are you doing to make the senior years better?

Bibliography

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Senior Citizens Bill of Rights

As a Senior Citizen, I believe that I have certain rights regardless of my race, sex or creed.

The right for me to have . . .

1. The understanding and respect of my community.
2. An environment in which I can be understood and accepted.
3. An opportunity to attend and participate in religious activities.
4. A community program which offers the opportunity, through recreation, for development of my potential.
5. The due respect of all citizens of the community, regardless of age.
6. An acknowledgment of my individuality as a Senior Citizen.
7. Health services to prevent and treat disease and to permit my mental, physical, and social development.
8. Recognition for my ability, training and experience.
9. A safe neighborhood in which to live.
10. Life in a community in which the well being and security of Senior Citizens is considered important.

WESTERN KENTUCKY UNIVERSITY

Senior Citizens Survey

1. Do you program for senior citizens? ___ yes ___ no

2. If no, do you plan to start a program for senior citizens? ___ yes ___ no
   If yes, when? _____

IF YOU DO PROGRAM FOR SENIOR CITIZENS:

3. Do you employee personnel to work primarily with senior citizens?
   ___ yes ___ no. If yes, how many? _____

4. What on-going activities do you offer for senior citizens? Please indicate participation figures in parenthesis and check frequency of activity meeting.

ACTIVITY	Number (Attending)	Frequency of Meeting Monthly	Weekly	Daily
a. _____	( )	_____	_____	_____
b. _____	( )	_____	_____	_____
c. _____	( )	_____	_____	_____
d. _____	( )	_____	_____	_____
e. _____	( )	_____	_____	_____
f. _____	( )	_____	_____	_____
g. _____	( )	_____	_____	_____

5. What special activities or events do you offer. (Please mark the same as question number four.)

ACTIVITY	Number (Attending)	Frequency of Meeting Monthly	Weekly	Daily
a. _____	( )	_____	_____	_____
b. _____	( )	_____	_____	_____
c. _____	( )	_____	_____	_____
d. _____	( )	_____	_____	_____
e. _____	( )	_____	_____	_____
f. _____	( )	_____	_____	_____
g. _____	( )	_____	_____	_____

6. Do you have a separate budget allocation for senior citizens? ___ yes ___ no
If yes, how much? _____

7. Do you operate facilities just for senior citizens? ___ yes ___ no. If yes, what type and when is it open?

Facility	Days and Hours Open
a. _____	_____
b. _____	_____
c. _____	_____
d. _____	_____
e. _____	_____
f. _____	_____

8. Do you have any staff interested in taking university classes in recreation, therapeutic recreation and/or adaptive physical education? ___ yes ___ no
If yes, which?

a. _____ undergraduate _____ graduate

b. _____ recreation _____ therapeutic recreation _____ adaptive physical education.

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